

## Producing Transformative Leaders in Africa through Education Pipelines

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to draw the attention of national governments and educators to the escalating poverty of transformative leadership in African society. Governments need to invest in the development of effective leaders for every section, sector and strata in society to transform the continent. On the contrary, education pipelines in Africa are skewed to produce a few university graduates to take up apex leadership positions in society. Yet school dropouts become field leaders who play a critical role in local governance and national transformation initiatives without a leadership education. In this study, the researcher used deductive and inductive methods to thematically analyze current approaches to pedagogy and leadership education in Africa from published literature, academic journals and descriptive statistics. The author suggests that school teachers are in a unique position to reverse the trend of poor leadership in society by equipping students with life skills to resolve social-economic challenges in their circumstances. However, empowering teachers to successfully address this need will require a substantive review of the foundations, philosophy and objectives of national education pipelines. There is also a need to review education structures, curriculum design, teacher training, examination boards and develop supportive policy frameworks to produce transformative leaders for the continent.

**Keywords:** Education pipelines; Transformative leadership; Community intelligence; Curriculum design; Teaching methods; Government policy.

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### Introduction

There are many calls in global fora for the emergence of transformative leaders in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Adeyemi, 2017). The calls are often made alongside accusations of poor governance (Meredith, 2005). Transformative leaders resolve problems, accelerate good governance and facilitate the socio-economic empowerment of citizens. While education systems are the backbone of the leadership development pipeline in Africa, less than 1% of those who enter the system get a leadership education (Igué, 2010). The select few who are taught leadership in tertiary institutions learn it from western perspectives that encounter historic, contextual and cultural adaptation challenges that clash with local ethics, values, virtues and community belief systems (Lerutla & Steyn, 2022).

Therefore, there is a need to explore mechanisms and methods to effectively teach leadership in a way that will enable the people of Africa to experience the benefits of a transforming society (Kuada, 2010). A review of historic and social statistics provides a context to explore, explain and evaluate the prevailing situation on the continent.

Forty percent of Africa's population is aged 15 years and younger (Statista, 2022). With such a large proportion of the population of school going age, education is of immediate and urgent strategic importance to shaping the current and future prosperity of the continent. Education pipelines provide for seven-eight years of primary school, four-six years of secondary education and two-five years in tertiary institutions. These three stage systems enable a small minority of students to

graduate at the tertiary level. The majority drop out at the primary and secondary school level. However, Africa's education programs suffer from low-quality teaching and learning with many children still out of school (Musau, 2018). In many schools, pedagogy lacks suitable input materials for teachers and students while school feeding programs are used to attract students to attend school in rural areas (Evans & Acosta, 2021).

A hundred years ago, 76% of Africans practiced traditional spirituality (awe of God) with a small minority of Muslims and Christians. Today, 57% profess Christianity, 29% Islam and only 13% profess traditional religion. The religious influence on the populations' virtue systems cannot be ignored when addressing issues in African society (Dickinson, 2022). While religion has reframed the peoples' spirituality, it has not changed the people's language or made a similar dent on their cultural value systems. Africans still identify with their cultural communities first, even within the context of nationalism, democracy and urbanization (Mbiti, 1991).

There are more than 3,000 ethnic groups and over 2,100 languages spoken on the continent (Study.com, 2022). This poses a complex linguistic and cultural challenge for those charged with the design of proficient national education systems to prepare leadership for the African society. The World Bank estimated 330 million poor in 2012, up from 280 million in 1990. In other words, approximately one third of Africa's population is classed as poor (The World Bank, 2016). Thirty-six of the seventy-three countries that qualify for the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) are from Africa (Strohecker & Bavier, 2020). Africa is ranked lowest in technology, internet connectivity, road networks and trade infrastructure (Africa Development Bank, 2022).

With this background picture, life in Africa cannot be said to be aspirational. There is little motivation to "rise out" of the western definition of poverty under the heavy socio-economic burdens the continent bears in relation to the rest of the world. The higher students climb on the education ladder, the greater the desire to escape rather than develop the continent, thus draining Africa's expensively developed intellectual capital and leadership resources (Benedict & Ukpere, 2012). Out of 48 countries and a population of 1 Billion in Sub-Saharan tertiary and school enrolment stands at

9.4% compared to a global average of 38%. Nine million (3%) of over 260 million students in school are enrolled in tertiary institutions. However, this is only 4% of the global enrollment in tertiary level institutions (World Bank, 2020). There is one trained teacher per 58 primary school students and one trained teacher per 43 pupils in secondary school (UNESCO, 2021). At university level, the numbers deviate exponentially with classes of 500-900 students due to massive shortages of lecturers and educational infrastructure (Djeugou, 2022). These numbers are obviously impractical in terms of quality pedagogy, effective leadership development and the hope for a transformative impact of education to the society. Teaching in the context of poorly resourced education systems, multiple cultural and religious contexts and poorly articulated leadership education policies pose a great limitation to producing the kind of leaders Africa needs.

The history of slave trade exported Africa's human leadership potential to work as free and unrewarded laborers in industrializing global economies. Colonialism traumatized people while new religions disconnected the people from their community value systems. All three had a dampening effect on the peoples psyche for progress along with the disorienting effects of western domination and economic bondage (Rotberg, 2014). The long-term impact of these historic crises created a problem of identity and desecrated African education, culture, traditions and practices that had enabled the continent to tend and maintain its wealth for centuries (Okoye & Pongou, 2015). The loss of these foundations presented a challenge to succeeding generations to create and communicate an authentic African identity. Today educated leaders in society openly espouse foreign values in contrast to local virtues, values and traditions (Gentile, 2012). The problem of identity is further corrupted by teachers and education systems that communicate knowledge as a foreign substance to be chewed and poured out without commensurate socio-economic advancement (Awori, 2022).

The problem with the literacy frames adopted by formal (modern) education systems were that they focused on western perspectives, ignored local culture and provided limited usability of indigenous knowledge of life skills in the African context. African perspectives on matters of science, arts and technology were hardly articulated in school

curricula. Current education systems in Africa enroll students into a frustrating bottleneck-dropout system of producing apex leaders through limited university slots while dropouts take up crucial field leadership roles in society without leadership training. Teaching leadership to all students within the school system would equip every student with transformative skills to advance the communities they come from and settle in. Providing every student exiting the education system with leadership skills will therefore narrow the deficit in the African leadership trust.

## Literature Review

### Leadership Concept

In order to make leadership a classroom subject, teachers need to communicate the cumulative properties of self-leadership, followership, character, teamwork, social transformation and community service to equip students to take up leadership roles in society (Bandura, 1997). Nonetheless, popular leadership definitions such as 'leadership is influence' (Maxwell, 1991), play a major role in developing student understanding of the role of leaders and leadership in society. For example, "Leadership is the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistants." A man who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends is a leader" (Harvard Business Review, 2004). Other theories describe leadership as a function of one's abilities, traits, charisma or approach to circumstances (Northouse, 2016). However, transformative leaders are first transformed in order to advance the environment and the wellbeing of the community in which they live. In other words, transformative leaders cannot give what they do not have (Preece, 2003).

Describing leadership as an inclusive and participatory role or adaptive process (Wanguba, 2020) opens up the opportunity for every student and indeed everyone in society to engage in its practice (Keeney, 2010). Teachers need to help students see leadership as a personal responsibility and an ethical contribution to the greater good and wellbeing of the society (Langlois, 2011). Teachers could use exploratory terms, open definitions and quotes to help students grasp the core concepts of leadership such as "leadership is doing the best you can with what you have", "leadership is improving yourself and your circumstances", "leadership is service in transforming a community" or "I may not change the world, but I can change my space". Each

of these statements imputes a personal responsibility for students to see themselves as leaders in society. This aligns with the cultural dimension of African society where members are given social responsibilities at every stage of their development from young children, youth, to adulthood through to community eldership (Bredlid, 2009). Political leadership examples given as benchmarks in African society fail to communicate the need for the empowerment of field leaders at middle and lower levels of society. Political leadership at its best appears to be a popularity contest rather than a sober process of identifying suitable leaders based on competence and aptitude with skill sets that can be studied and developed in a classroom (Adams & Agomor, 2015). Field leadership requires all the core competencies of self-leadership as a citizen, followership as a team player and community engagement as a transformative agent in society. The bulk of Africa's leadership trust is made up of field leaders with individuals playing important roles as mothers, fathers, entrepreneurs, police officers, community elders, pastors, imams, shopkeepers, farmers and owners of small enterprises. Field leaders play a critical role in the governance, stability, advancement and sustenance of African society (Wyper, 2014).

Leadership in Africa is largely achieved through consultative processes within the family, among elders, with the chiefs and with representative community groups. Rulings are respected and adhered to after due consultation. Individual heroism and dictatorship are not encouraged. Rather, a community's resolve is more important and impactful than a single leader's ideals. The principles of African consultative leadership are based on peace, inclusivity, continuity, survival, success and well-being of the society (Malunga, 2009). They include a) the acknowledgement of the person as a valued member of society, b) establishment of pertinent truths and facts regarding matters at hand, c) acknowledgement of injuries, feelings, emotions and concerns relating to society, d) discussion and evaluation of investigative perceptions, perspectives and principles surrounding the issue, e) an appeal for understanding, commitment and goodwill to resolve issues for individual and overall good of society, and f) acceptance counsel on the way forward in terms of forgiveness, fines and strategic action (Tutu, 2004). In these governance principles, we see that

the wellbeing and continuity of society is of prime importance in the spirit of Ubuntu. Consultative leaders use these principles not only to resolve issues in society, but also to effectively map out a shared future. These principles reflect a deep sense of respect for humanity and human dignity, ethical sense of truth, emotional intelligence, transformative thinking, visionary framing of issues and support for pragmatic initiatives to establish a better inclusive future for all. Ubuntu provides for exploratory leadership, pragmatic decision making and consensus rather than autocracy or democracy (Monyoncho, 2014). Teachers of leadership need to appreciate the functional brand of leadership that works best in the continental context and not dwell on the virtues of foreign leadership theory that have limited application in the African context.

### **Literacy**

Education in modern Africa is based on the concept of literacy as the ability to read, write and do arithmetic i.e., 3Rs. This definition of literacy was introduced to Africa by religious missionaries and was adopted by educational institutions as the basis for learning and formulation of school programs. The model implied that those who did not go to school were illiterate (Fourie & Swanepoel, 2015). However, the ability to communicate in a local dialect was not examinable as literacy. Indeed, the skill of a ten-year-old youth taking care of sheep for a whole day, counted for nothing within the education system. Yet that young boy would grow up to shoulder family responsibilities and take up leadership roles within the community. Social and cultural education was never recognized as a literacy program because it was never incorporated or equated to attending formal school (Omolewa, 2007).

The 3Rs model is at best discriminatory in its claim to sufficiency in providing students with a holistic socialized education. Hidden behind the 3Rs was a fourth "R", Religion. The salient object of religious education was not academics, but conversion (Felix, 2019). The fifth "R", Culture, that has educated African communities for thousands of years was totally ignored with no place in modern education systems. However, education systems have subtly replaced African culture with western virtues, values and belief systems. The wisdom of African proverbs was abandoned for western poetry. Foreign religions were, by design, a direct challenge to the African way of life (Lindenfeld, 2005). Those who did not accept the new religion and attend mission

schools were labelled "uneducated". However, a cursory evaluation of Islamic and Christian scriptures reveals context set in Arabic and Jewish culture (Adeyemo, 2006). Colonial literacy programs produced clerical officers, supervisors, elementary farmers and primary school teachers to service the interests of the colonial masters. Given that education systems require both motive and context, the design of literacy and education programs in Africa were not geared to produce leaders for African society (Mazonde, 2001).

African systems of education were created by pre and post-colonial government commissions that ensured controllable, elitist education for a select few (Kithinji, 2019). These education systems strategically incorporated western puritan virtues, religious-cultural value systems and foreign political ideology (Fourie, Ross, & Viljoen, 2013). These presumptions contributed to the inability of education systems to develop desirable leadership in Africa for modern Africa. The transformative impact of leadership education in Africa may need to be driven by 5Rs, reading, writing, arithmetic, religion and culture, to socialize the value of education and translate learning into life skills. Therefore, there is need for well-curated, intentional leadership development programs to be built into education pipelines to respond to the leadership deficit across the continent (Tetty, 2012).

### **Blooms Taxonomy**

The first two levels of the 1956 model of Blooms Taxonomy (Forehand, 2010) are at the core of formal education programs in Africa. The teaching of "knowledge" and "comprehension" is emphasized without contextual interpretation. "Rote and recall", has been emphasized from primary school through secondary and tertiary learning. Scripted examination criteria defined what was correct and incorrect. This prevented students from learning to think of creative options to resolve realistic problems. It implied that there was only one way to solve problems. Basic principles of application and analysis were taught to students in vocational colleges to the extent that it facilitated basic production of tables or growing cash crops. Synthesis and evaluation are nominally addressed at university where students are challenged to think independently after nearly two decades of school programming that reinforced rote and recall learning (Kenya National Examinations Council, 2019).

The 2001 version of Blooms taxonomy changes the education narrative by asking students to relate and mentally engage with an emotional connection to the subject matter. While this development may be considered a holistic improvement, it is programmed to take a child nearly two decades to develop this new perspective of life. The principles of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating could be emphasized in all classes and every level of education. This would instantly empower students with leadership competencies to address practical socio-economic challenges in their immediate environment. More importantly, it would ensure that both graduates and dropouts, at various stages of the education ladder, leave with functional leadership and life skills to tackle problems requiring higher level critical, analysis and creative thinking in society.

### **Educational Modelling**

The argument for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, (STEM) model of education are based on the assumption that advancement of a society is dependent on its technology competence. However, the realization that creativity is not only generated by scientific thought processes led to the revival of engagement in the arts as a key to enriching social outcomes, hence the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) model. Newer educational modelling calls for the Science, Technology, Robotics, Engineering, Arts and Math (STREAM) model, (Badmus & Omosowo, 2020). However, Africa's rich cultural diversity is a source of creative thought and social enrichment, even though African culture, the substance of the society's arts and science, is excluded from modern education systems. Africa may only be able to enhance its full social potential by harnessing its unique cultural competence to boost its education products with a STREAM-Culture driven education (Abah, Mashebe, & Denunga, 2015).

### **Psychosocial Development**

Whereas Erikson's stages of psychosocial development provide a broad age-based framework for Psychosocial development (McLeod, 2018), the specific application and context of these frameworks in the immediate African context may prove to have a wide variation in terms of reality, role and life expectancy in a community. Erikson profiles a lifespan of activity that would suggest that leaders are most energetic and engaging in society between 20-40 while those inclined to give back to society are much older between 40 and 65. The

average life expectancy around the world is 64yrs while the average life expectancy in Africa is 56yrs (Schlein, 2022). Scaling Erikson's chart to fit the African context indicates that leaders should be at their prime between 15-25 years of age. Yet those who pursue higher education are still in school in this age range. This suggests the urgent need for greater energy to be put into leader education and preparation at the primary level of education (Gyimah-Brempong, 2011). Those who pursue college degrees barely enter productive roles in society before 25 years of age.

Nonetheless, African college graduates enter society unprepared for leadership responsibility while their counterparts around the globe are already established in leadership roles. The ease of learning curve suggests that learning takes place most rapidly up to six years of age and then drops sharply and tapers off at 12 years of age (Janacsek, Fiser, & Nemeth, 2012 ). Many children in Africa enter schooling between 8 and 12 years old, long after the ease of learning functions has declined to a basic low. The children then struggle to adjust to learning in a second or third language in school. Early childhood education remains for a privileged few, yet it is a period in a student's life when critical learning takes place (Mwamwenda, 2014). Many rural schools still teach lower classes of these ages in their "mother tongue" before switching to global languages during upper primary school (Evans & Acosta, 2021).

## **Methodology**

### **Design**

The study used an exploratory research design to investigate research questions relating to education pipelines producing leaders for society in Africa.

### **Population and Sampling**

The study drew from the context of the state of education in Africa and sampled leadership, literacy, educational models and psychosocial development literature.

### **Instruments**

The study made use of online resources of academic journals, library books and authoritative statistical databases to obtain relevant information on the nature of the education pipeline producing leaders for Africa.

### **Treatment of Data**

The study reviewed qualitative data alongside descriptive socio-economic statistics to interpret the

status of the leadership education pipeline and thematically analyzed journal articles and relevant published literature to identify limitations and challenges in the production of transformative leaders for the African society. The researcher further used deductive and inductive methods to analyze and discuss findings and draw conclusions using a positivist ontology based on the interpretation of theoretical models, philosophy, facts and data.

### **Ethical considerations**

This study was guided by the academic research principles of collating, citing and analyzing information and data available in the public domain and make nonspecific reference to individuals covered by the study. The researcher acted independently, inspired by an interest to conduct value adding applied research without prodding, prompting or external funding.

### **Results and Discussion**

Based on the collated literature, the results show that there is a need for specific realignment of national education pipelines to ensure the production of transformative leaders for effective service at all levels and sections of African society. Results are presented by research questions:

**Research Question 1:** Do education curricula provide relevant content to produce functional leaders at all levels of African society?

The general call for effective leadership in Africa suggests that education systems should do more to produce leaders with transformative capability and sensibility. Nonetheless, the call also puts teachers on the frontline of developing leaders in Africa and therefore questions and challenges their equipment and competence to deliver functional leaders through society out of schooling programs. While teachers are contracted to teach students subject content, they are under no obligation to see their role as a responsibility to prepare leaders for society beyond ensuring their students pass pre-set examinations. In other words, the aspiration for teachers to produce functional leaders in society is beyond their power and authority. It is dictated by policy makers, curriculum designers and national examination boards. Since examination requirements do not demand the instruction and assessment of leadership, few teachers are inspired to mentor students beyond curriculum content.

School teachers are provided with predesigned curricula and subject coverage requirements by national governments. They are expected to deliver the content uniformly to prepare students to advance through the education pipeline (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2022). The principles of teaching suggest that teachers direct the destiny of students, polish whatever innate talent they have and equip them with competencies that are gainful in a wider society (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, 2022). However, if leadership is important to society, it does suggest that; 1) the formal teaching of leadership in schools is vital, 2) that all teachers need to understand and receive training to impart leadership skills to students, and 3) the design of a suitable leadership curriculum and education system will positively impact the quality of leaders produced by the education pipeline (Du Plessis, 2021 ).

The design of revised curriculum, course content and teaching approaches can be geared towards challenging students to start thinking from the “unknown to the known” rather than “known to unknown”. This will feed their desire to spearhead changes and equip them with transformative leadership thinking to explore, experiment and investigate options and opportunities to create new reality (Keeney, 2010). Leadership education then becomes an extremely valuable tool to unlock desirable future knowledge and knowhow. Nonetheless, even without a formalized curriculum, teachers of all disciplines can communicate the value of leadership in society within the context of the subjects they teach as an all-encompassing life skill (Iwowo, 2015).

**Research Question 2:** What is the social impact of the omission of African knowledge bases from formal education systems in the production of leaders for Africa?

The omission of indigenous knowledge bases from formal education systems causes the loss of knowledge and a lack of respect and understanding of social norms, customs and traditions. This results in the demise of the knowledge of the environment, natural science, arts and local wisdom with each succeeding generation. The extinction of this knowledge base is imminent with the emphasis of modern methods of teaching and learning. Society thus becomes poorer in terms of its capacity to address leadership and community survival challenges because the local wisdom that sustained

community existence, governance and development is no longer passed on to succeeding generations. Leaders produced from modern schooling programs thus face a major identification dilemma when they re-enter society and are forced to make a complex choice between what they learned in school, what it is best for the community and how to lead transformation in a society that is steeped in community success norms that cannot be wished away (Monyoncho, 2014). Apart from the systematic integration of local indigenous knowhow into education programs that will ensure that leaders understand and harness local wisdom in decision making, the (conventional) unidirectional teacher-student process of education may need to be revised to incorporate collaborative learning methods such as transformational teaching.

Transformational teaching is about creating a memorable experience which student can use as a precedent to make decisions in future contexts. This approach to teaching focuses on facilitating behavior changes beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Enabling transformative learning is teaching in such a way as to enable students to make a paradigm shift, change in behavior or personal adjustment of perspectives to power new behavior. Transformational teachers are critically aware that assumptions and previous learning may actually stifle future growth, but may also be valuable in affirming or advancing new knowledge acquisition. They should therefore strive to remove barriers to student development and maturity in their context by presenting them with new experiences that form a basis of possibility thinking to make pragmatic decisions about the future (McGonigal, 2005).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) incorporates methods and approaches in which students tackle real-world problems to develop an understanding of principles and key concepts related to the problem. Rather than have the teacher teach subject principles and urge students to remember them, PBL promotes critical thinking, problem solving and the de-construction and construction of ideas. PBL challenges students and equips them with life-long teach-ability because they have learned the creative value of learning (Duch, Groh, & Allen, 2001).

Transformative teaching empowers students to learn how to learn. By asking the necessary questions to generate the information they need, students are equipped to facilitate transformation in

society (Preece, 2003). Students come to school with at least a decade of cultural education in the most formative and absorbent years of their lives.

In other words, teachers in Africa need to counter the “tabula rasa” approach to pedagogy where students are presumed to know nothing at all (Duschinsky, 2012). With an emic understanding of the student’s perspective, teachers may be able to accelerate student learning and leadership education by appreciating culture as the first line of instruction and society as the laboratory of interpretation of learning. At the same time, classroom engagement may need to shift from specialist lecture methodology to consultative participatory topical engagement (Jegede, 1995). This of course calls for a drastic reduction of class sizes and a dramatic increase of trained teachers with an understanding of consultative leadership development. Classroom becomes a peopled learning resource where the teacher facilitates students with mental and social transformation through the interaction with knowledge, resources and student experiences. In this way both the teacher and the student are transformed by the learning experience (Merriam & Ntseane, 2008).

**Research Question 3:** Should formal schooling programs be isolated from day-to-day societal socio-economic activity and intercourse?

In Africa, emotional acumen is ingrained in community intelligence based on culture, family life, community values and spirituality. Community intelligence is firmly ingrained in the first decade of life, long before teachers begin to challenge students with values through the “right answer and wrong answer” experience of classroom education that promotes rote learning. As students continue their schooling, their values get further and further removed from societal norms and conditions. Whilst they are members of a community, their education alienates them from their society and creates a bridge of distrust between the educated and “illiterate”. Graduates of education systems are schooled in foreign values of individualism and democracy at the expense of socialization principles of African society that stress the importance of communal and collective responsibility as principles of social success and the essence of African society (Malunga, 2009).

In African society, community intelligence prevails and graduating students need to engage society within the six social competencies of Ubuntu; a)

modeling the way, b) communal enterprise and a shared vision, c) change and transformation, d) interconnectedness, interdependency and empowerment, e) collectivism and solidarity and f) continuous integrated development (Ncube, 2010). Community intelligence provides a context for Goleman's; Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Self-motivation, Empathy and Sustaining effective relationships (Goleman, 1995). Unless teaching leadership acquires meaning and interpretation in the African context, it will remain foreign in terms of conceptualization, interpretation and application.

**Research Question 4:** Would the introduction of leadership training as part of formal education curricula enhance the preparation and empowerment of graduates to be transformative leaders in society?

While the design of modern education curricula focuses on dispensing western concepts of knowledge and STEM education, these concepts lack direct interpretation in many of Africa's rural settings which supply the bulk of those who enroll in formal education programs in Africa where cultural norms traditions and communal practices dominate day to day socio-economic activity. The fact that these local contexts are excluded from education programs creates a dichotomy between learning and life among students. However, leadership is an integral aspect of social intercourse and finds immediate application in all contexts. The adoption of leadership training in formal education curricula will find immediate and universal socio-economic application in students' lives. Nonetheless, in order for students to absorb and apply leadership principles effectively, it requires that the approach diverts from the standard approaches to curriculum coverage and rote learning. Students need to be exposed to leadership situations, explore outcomes and discuss ethical and philosophical interpretations of various leadership approaches to appreciate the benefits of the practice of various leadership principles. This would suggest that teachers would need to be empowered to facilitate the process of learning leadership which is distinct from teaching methodologies of knowledge content subjects such as science and Mathematics.

According to Ntamushobora (2009), knowledge, in itself, is not transformative. Thus, an education system that is built on delivering knowledge will make very little impact in society. At best it will achieve rote-recall but no understanding. The

author argues that transformative learning has three components that are particularly relevant to Africa. 1) such knowledge must touch the mind, will and emotions of an individual in such a way that it both equips and transforms them, 2) the knowledge should be adapted to the worldview of the receiver not the giver of the teaching, 3) it must be cultured to communicate analogies within the student (African) context in such a way as to trigger or present an argument for societal change in the context in which the public can relate with.

While a great deal of theory is communicated in the classroom, this model facilitates transference of learning, but also a cross-fertilization of ideas and facilitates social transformation by injection of theory and knowhow into community engagement. Schooling outcomes could be enhanced by teaching students using socialized processes that develop their ability to deconstruct and construct leadership issues in society. Transformative education enables students to learn how to learn and thus readily address the challenges of a dynamic and changing world.

**Research Question 5:** Is the linear bottleneck structure of education systems the best tool of identifying and developing leaders for African society?

Education systems in Africa are heavily relied upon to sift through student academic competence to identify those who are most highly intellectually endowed to take up apex leadership roles in society. Education pipelines serve to identify leaders to apex leadership positions in government, private sector and major social institutions (Kithinji, 2019). However, the bottleneck system has a built-in process to eliminate the bulk of student enrollment from the education pipeline that consigns dropouts to presumed lesser leadership roles in society. These field leaders are immediately thrust into transformative leadership responsibility in society raising families, engaging in small enterprise and participating in social welfare and community development programs. Yet field leaders are called upon to do so without the benefit of a leadership education (World Bank, 2020).

Ethics involves identifying concepts of what is right and what is wrong and using them to validate actions and decision in the interest and context of a society (Metz, 2012). However, in Africa, with its thousands of cultural communities, religious assemblies and ethnic value systems, "right and

wrong” can vary considerably to the extent that it may cause conflict with cultural norms and local wisdom. In such circumstances the question of good, better and best options become the standard of acceptability. This presents a sliding scale rather than an absolute measure of right and wrong. Nonetheless, education systems strongly advance the concept of absolute “right and wrong”, “correct and incorrect”, through tests and examinations that determine life changing, career and education advancement of students (Popham, 2002). Nonetheless, students struggle to find “right” and “wrong” answers in class that do not have cut and dry solutions in life. This dilemma encourages them to resort to rote learning to pass examinations. However, this leaves school graduates ill-equipped to deal with non-absolute reality in the outside world.

Education pipelines may need to give more attention to the social integration of school graduates. Education systems in Africa extract students from homes and isolate them in learning institutions where they learn ideals and principles away from their social context. The nature of schooling is similar to that of an incubation center where knowledge is acquired in the hope that it will be used to transform society when students are released back into society. However, life around schools in rural areas tends to continue without reference to learning centers in their midst. Indeed, those who advance in education are encouraged to leave the village and seek opportunities abroad. In other words, educational institutions have a very limited transformative impact in their social contexts. As students leave boarding and day schools and go back to their homes to engage in the daily routines of social intercourse, very little change is advanced from learning institutions into society. By equipping students with ethical competencies and leadership skills to appreciate their circumstances, students will be able to confidently address the reality they find in society. They will also develop skills and capabilities to venture beyond the current reality and facilitate societal change, advancement and transformation (Griffiths & Prozesky, 2020).

**Research Question 6:** What policy motives inform the design and structure of formal education systems in Africa?

Formal education and literacy programs in Africa have been driven by vested interests throughout

history. The interests of slavers, colonial administrations and missionary teaching have been carried forward into education systems that are keen on weeding out talent and advancing academic excellence at the expense of developing appropriate leadership at all levels of society (Mazonde, 2001). Indeed, literacy programs ignore local contextual challenges of developing leaders who are capable of transforming the circumstances in which they were born or brought up.

However, modern education systems focus on academic talent and ignore social competence. The focus on western driven arts and sciences informs students of advances in western societies, but hardly equips them to address the challenge of the (under) development where they live. The drive for the introduction of STREAM education in Africa presumes that school graduates will find the application of learning tools (such as robots) in real life (Badmus & Omosewo, 2020). This, however, is hardly the case. Many students return to rural circumstances where there are no roads, tractors or basic farm implements to till the ground. While education policy makers focus on advancing teaching methods, they ignore the student’s social transformation needs. For example, teaching a student to drive a car or use a computer (in school), who comes from a village where there are no roads or electricity, leaves the graduate no option but to leave the village and search for opportunities in urban areas upon graduation. This constitutes brain drain from the village and the de-capacitation of the community leadership resources.

Policy motives that inform the design, structure and upgrading of educational systems based on global changes, western literacy philosophies and technological advances at the expense of local, community and social advancement are bound to depreciate the value of education among the bulk of student populations in Africa (Igué, 2010). Valuable education should be an empowering and transformative experience that equips students to advance their circumstances in life.

## Discussion

While teachers would benefit from training and a curriculum designed to guide them in providing students with a leadership education, national governments, educators, investors and sponsors of schools, curriculum designers and examination boards need to ensure that, 1) the adverse historic effects of slavery, the disorienting epoch of

colonialism alongside the oppressive demands of global socio-economic dominance and foreign ideologies do not compromise the quality and competence of transformative leaders produced through the African education pipeline, 2) the limitations of modern, formal, western literacy, religious and emerging models, such as STEM are not unduly burdened on already frail education systems in Africa, 3) the unique challenges of teaching transformative leadership in Africa are addressed and methods are designed to the transfer benefits of such learning to society, 4) African culture, as a success philosophy and vehicle for social transformation should be strategically mobilized to advance communities and harness their intellectual capital, creativity and innovation for posterity and socio-economic prosperity, 5) one of the core purposes of education should be the production of leaders for society, and 6) that authentic African leadership principles, philosophies and practices, such as consultative leadership, Ubuntu and spirituality are key to facilitating transformative societal advancement and should not be lost under popular global thought.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Teachers are in a unique position to bridge the leadership deficit in society. However, leadership education is a strategic responsibility of national governance. The African proverb, “the fish rots from the head” is an apt illustration of the need for national institutions with education oversight to re-engineer the education pipeline to accelerate the production of transformative leaders able to deliver the Africa we want (African Union Commission, 2015). Educators need to, 1) design education curricula that produce functional leaders for all levels in society, 2) ensure formal education programs drawn from indigenous cultural wisdom to successfully address and transform communities and avoid supplanting African culture with foreign ideals that find limited application in the African context, 3) review the current formatting of schooling that extracts students from society at formative ages and isolates them in school institutions for up to two decades as returning students face social integration and adjustment challenges that alienate and disqualify them from offering transformative voice in social issues, 4) teach leadership in schools to equip the next generation with a leadership conscience and transformative capability, 5) review the linear bottleneck structure of education systems to cater

for the development of field leaders, and 6) establish strategic leadership development motives, objectives and education philosophies that guarantee the production of transformative leaders through the education pipeline.

The researcher further makes the following specific recommendations:

1. Educators should study and capture the leadership needs in all sectors and levels in society and design curricula in such a way as to ensure that all students exiting at any stage of the education pipeline have the requisite skills to serve as transformative leaders in society.
2. There is a need to review education curricula to incorporate the cumulative wealth of indigenous wisdom alongside, equipping the next generation with the capacity to address future reality.
3. Socialization of the education experience will enable students to maintain a real-time connection with socio-economic challenges in society and engage in their resolution in their social context. This will make education practical, meaningful and solution oriented while availing student access to indigenous knowledge bases of arts, culture and science.
4. There is need to include leadership as a formal academic subject of study and empowering personal development life skill in education systems.
5. Education systems should be geared to harness student leadership aptitude and potential and prepare them for transformative deployment as effective apex and field leaders in society.
6. National policy makers could revise the linear (pyramid) bottleneck education pipeline to a more inclusive “open branch” (Baobab tree) model that provides for socialized career options upon completion of primary school with opportunity to pursue transformative leadership in multiple spheres and sectors of the economy.

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